

1st Annual Friends in Recovery Recognition and Awards Banquet

What a concept! We all had an idea that we would like to give awards and recognize all the people in our lives that have been influential and that have made a contribution to our lives. These people include peer support, case managers, clinicians, parole and probation officers, and even judges. These individuals have aided us in making better life choices.

We just held such awards banquets in Casa Grande, Nogales, and Yuma all hosted by Friends in Recovery. We are all friends at The Living Center and Turtle Bay Café. I don't think this has ever been done before stated a lot of us friends. "Do you think we can actually be able to get all this organized and everyone in one place," asked Richard? The staff was also helpful in helping us all get this accomplished. Every agency from Casa Grande participated and attended the banquet. The parole and probation departments were also there and even the Judge from Drug Court.

Awards were given to the Best of the Year categories in each agency for Peer Support, Case Managers, Clinicians, Probation Officers, Parole Officers, and Judge of the Year. There were also awards given to the Overall Best Peer Support, Case Managers, and Clinicians of that area. Then there was one final award given to the Best Support Partner of the Year which was the outstanding person out of everyone. We all for a month nominated and voted for the nominees and winners. Even the nominees all received certificates. The winners all received certificates and a golden daisy award. There is a plaque in each center with the Best Support Partner of the Year's name on it.



Each Awards banquet saw a lot of laughter, good food, and even a lot of tears. Amber stated, "It was so emotional seeing how touched everyone was to receive their award. It made us all feel good how all the winners mentioned this was the best award they have ever received."

All three centers has had people pass away who will always be in all of our hearts and we all voted to name the final awards after these individuals who were special to each location. We asked the families and friends of these special individuals to come to our banquets and present the final award which was and will always be named after these loved ones.





The first Awards Banquet was held in Casa Grande on June 7th. What a great experience said everyone who attended. We asked Terry Stevens from Cenpatico come as the guest speaker who was amazed at the turnout. We had around 110 people at the banquet. Angie stated, "This was the best thing that I ever been a part of." Tammy mentioned, "I felt so proud to be able

to hand out the award to Best Peer Support of the year. I felt important." Richard stated, "Volunteering at the café and doing presentations with the staff made it easier to get up in front of people and give out an award. I thought it was going to be a lot harder, but it was a lot of fun." "I felt like I could accomplish anything after doing this. Interacting with all the staff and their families from all the agencies in town made me feel like I wasn't just a participant and I felt equal to everyone," stated Jillian. Tears were in everyone's eyes and a standing ovation when Erin Sullivan from Pinal Hispanic Council won the final award. "You could really see the emotion in all the staff which shows they are all doing this job for the right reason. I want to become a peer support someday," said Alice.

The second Awards Banquet was held in Nogales on June 14th. This banquet was another big success. All the agencies, probation, parole, and a judge were all represented at this banquet. The guest speaker at this event was Adriana Romero from Cenpatico. "I loved the chance to hand out a couple of awards to my agency I go to. It was really cool to see everyone from every agency in one place working together," stated Chris. You could see all the agencies were really overwhelmed by the recognition. Judge Mary Helen Maley stated "This is the best thing she has ever been involved with." Ruben stated, "That really made us feel good coming from a judge." Clarissa noted, "The final award given to Josh Canchola from Cortazon was really deserved. He helps us all so much."



Just as the first banquet there was applause and a standing ovation for the winner. The tears welling up in each of the winners when asked to say a few words after receiving their awards was what it was all about.

The third Awards Banquet was held in Yuma on June 20th. I should say that good things should come in numbers of three because this banquet was just as much of a success as the first two. As the other two the decorations and catering was awesome. All but one agency attended. This banquet even had a disco ball when the *We Are Family* music began, the theme song to all three banquets. The guest speakers for this banquet were Andrea Hartwig and Jesus Hartwig from Cenpatico. They both spoke



heartfelt about us all. Elizabeth stated, "It is good to know that there is hope out there and that so many people care about us and we get to recognize them." David said, "What it meant for me to present



an award and speak in public. I have never been this outgoing before.” The night was again full of laughter and a lot of tears. One winner, Tony Smith from CIA stated, “He cherishes this award more than any other he ever received.” Joseph said, “I really loved giving an award to Teri Boothby from Mountain Health and Wellness. I feel she has been like a second mom to me over the years.” Teri also won the Overall Best Support of the Year and was so overwhelmed with tears by the end of the night she could barely accept the award.

We all just want to say that this was a huge success and think that they should have these events everywhere. We were told by some staff that this is why they are in this field and these banquets have remotivated them. The ones who were nominated and the winners of these awards stand out to us and it goes without saying they are all in it for the right reasons. Everyone involved with these banquets help us in everyday life and hopefully we help them with theirs as well. We all loved the opportunity to give back to those in this society who have given so freely to us. Thank you all.

From us Friends in Recovery